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Chair: Mr. Mero (Vice-Chair) ..... (United Republic of Tanzania)

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In the absence of Mr. Talbot (Guyana), Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 20: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/67/341)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/67/206, A/67/348 and A/CONF.216/16)

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(h) Harmony with Nature (*continued*) (A/67/317)

(i) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (*continued*) (A/67/175, A/67/314 and A/67/318)

1. **Ms. Kage** (Germany) said that poverty eradication, environmental protection and global governance needed to be treated together and holistically. The sustainable development goals and post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) could play a key role to that end, but both processes must be coordinated closely to create a consistent and coherent set of goals. The sustainable development goals should be visionary and aim to enhance sustainable development in all countries, but they must address all three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner. Consequently, the open working group on the establishment of the sustainable development goals had a crucial task and must be promptly constituted to expedite the process.

2. Germany had long been an active partner in sustainable development and would continue to increase its commitment, including by raising relevant official development assistance (ODA) to $4.6 billion per annum by 2030 with a view to giving 100 million people access to energy. Germany was the second largest bilateral donor in water sanitation and had doubled its commitments over the preceding five years, delivering on its pledge to provide $3 billion for rural development and food security. It would at least maintain that level through to 2015.

3. **Ms. Bubanja** (Serbia) said that strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would ensure its secure and predictable financing and enhance synergy among multilateral agreements relating to, inter alia, the environment, biodiversity and chemical and waste management. The process of establishing the sustainable development goals was likewise important and should take into account real circumstances and the many crises which had hindered sustainable development in recent years. In addition, a special intergovernmental process should be set up to draft a strategic document, with the participation of all stakeholders, on devising a global environmental protection strategy to be coordinated by UNEP on the basis of its programme of work and relevant international recommendations and conclusions. However, further financial assistance and expertise would be needed, including from the United Nations system.

4. Serbia attached great importance to sound chemicals management and sought to integrate recommendations of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and European Union standards into national regulations, with a view to reducing the threat of dangerous chemicals and finding safer alternatives. It also sought to raise awareness of such hazards via various mechanisms and events.

5. Finally, she noted that Serbia had significant and useable renewable energy sources, which it sought to exploit with a view to increasing the 21.2-per-cent share of renewable sources in its energy mix to 27 per cent. To that end, Serbia was promoting the construction of hydroelectric plants by subsidizing energy prices. It sought to make energy savings of at least 9 per cent by 2018.

6. **Ms. Alowais** (United Arab Emirates) said that her delegation welcomed the establishment of a high-level group to formulate the post-2015 development agenda. The formation of the intergovernmental open working group to develop the sustainable development goals should be expedited, and its members should be appointed on the basis of technical expertise in order to avoid politicization. The United Arab Emirates hoped to play a part in the group's work in order to help developing countries implement their national sustainable development policies, taking into consideration the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed countries must not withdraw from their commitments, particularly with regard to ODA, which were all the more important in the wake of the economic and financial crises.

7. The United Arab Emirates had made significant progress in a range of areas, including eliminating poverty, guaranteeing free education, empowering women, training youth, protecting the environment, preserving biodiversity, combating desertification, broadening the production base and moving from oil to more environmentally friendly forms of energy. In January 2012, the Government had launched a national initiative entitled "A green economy for sustainable development". Legislation had been enacted to mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce carbon emissions, raise awareness of climate change and ensure that 7 per cent of the country's energy needs came from renewable sources by 2020. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development had allocated $350 million in facilitated loans for innovative renewable energy projects, which had been approved by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and would be enacted over the following seven years.

8. In January 2013, the city of Abu Dhabi would host the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, which would draw over 30,000 participants from 150 States with a view to discussing pressing issues regarding energy, water and the environment. Because urgent solutions were needed in to assist one billion people around the world who lacked modern sustainable sources of energy, the United Arab Emirates supported the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative and other efforts to promote safe and low-carbon energy and alternative energy sources.

9. **Mr. Kalandarov** (Tajikistan) said that his country focused on effective and rational use of natural resources and, in that regard, attached great importance to the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013, which would raise awareness of freshwater-related problems, unify efforts among all stakeholders and contribute to achieving internationally agreed goals in water and sanitation. Consequently, adopting the resolution on the implementation of the international year of water cooperation would provide considerable support, particularly in developing follow-up measures.

10. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that his country prioritized sustainable development and the green economy, particularly in the energy, agriculture and tourism sectors. Montenegro had begun transforming its energy sector in 2003 and had recently adopted a long-term strategy focusing on energy security, sustainable energy development and a competitive energy market underpinned by rational use of energy resources, environmental protection, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. It targeted a 9-per-cent increase in energy efficiency by 2018 and a 33-per-cent share of renewable sources in its energy mix by 2020. A clear, accommodative legislative and procedural framework paved the way for the development of renewable energy sources and prompt attainment of goals, while international banks had also assisted in implementing energy efficiency measures and creating better public infrastructure.

11. With weather events increasing in intensity, Montenegro was preparing a climate mitigation and adaptation plan which would focus on energy efficiency, reducing emissions and developing the agriculture and tourism sectors, as they were most affected by climate change.

12. **Mr. Duffy** (Ireland) said that poverty, environmental sustainability and climate change required a concerted and coherent response from the international community. Environmental sustainability was critical to poverty eradication and should be given due consideration when addressing social and economic needs. Ireland looked beyond current

economic challenges to set out a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient future in its national strategy. It had committed to implementing a green economy plan with a view to economic growth and job creation via various support mechanisms and interrelated strategies in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

13. Internationally, focus must turn to implementation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) outcomes at all levels. Before rushing into future commitments, however, it was important to review progress on commitments such as the MDGs, which were still far from attainment, and accelerate progress where there had been shortfalls, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected States. Essential to that review was learning how the MDGs had served populations they were intended to benefit most and what those populations' priorities were. Future policy should be informed by such grass-roots consultation and expert analysis.

14. **Mr. Coulibaly** (Burkina Faso) said that Burkina Faso was particularly vulnerable to desertification, owing to its dependence on natural resources, its fragile ecosystem and its lack of infrastructure and capacity, as well as the regular droughts and famines afflicting much of the Sahel region. The situation would not change without the required financial and technological resources. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) had a key role to play, but it had yet to define a strategic international framework on sustainable land management and risked losing its credibility. However, the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Changwon in 2011, had seen a number of decisions and compromises adopted that would create favourable conditions for the implementation of the Convention.

15. Achieving a land-degradation-neutral world by 2020 would require increased international efforts and intergovernmental negotiations on an additional protocol to UNCCD on sustainable land management. Furthermore, resource mobilization was ultimately critical to implementation. The decisions regarding the financing and mandate of the Global Environment Fund must therefore be put into effect without delay in order to provide an official source of adequate, predictable and timely financing. Research, training and a stronger scientific base were also key factors and required greater exchange of knowledge and scientific cooperation. The second Scientific Conference of UNCCD, to be held in February 2013, would help in that regard.

16. Burkina Faso hoped that desertification, degradation and drought would receive due attention in the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes and post-2015 development agenda. The matter should not be viewed in isolation, but together with the promotion of peace, economic growth and development. Moreover, efforts should be led by the international community and involve cooperation among Member States.

17. **Mr. Empole** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said the implementation of the Rio+20 outcome document should be coordinated by the United Nations system, particularly in terms of defining the sustainable development goals and establishing a follow-up framework. The goals should prioritize well-being, poverty eradication and building better societies via decent work, education, stronger research and development sectors, innovation and technology. Technology transfers and greater emphasis on renewable energy sources and national strategies would help provide developing countries with access to power and modern energy sources and enhance their sustainable development and quality of life.

18. The international community must take action to halt the negative effects of climate change. Negotiations must continue in order to ensure the adoption of an adequate post-Kyoto road map and an international mechanism to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Providing technology transfers according to developing countries' needs and operationalizing the Green Climate Fund and fast-start finance were also important, but it was ultimately incumbent on States to improve living conditions through strategy and action. To that end, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was committed to preserving its forests and enhancing the many benefits they brought to the whole of humanity. It was important, however, for the international community to take the next step by finalizing and adopting an international convention on forests, and thereby engaging in a real partnership for green growth.

19. Despite increased international commitment to mitigate natural disasters, their frequency and intensity had increased. Vulnerability to such disasters differed according to level of development. Consequently, promoting international cooperation and incorporating

disaster risk management into sustainable development efforts would help to develop a post-2015 road map for disaster risk reduction. To that end, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) had adopted a regional risk reduction and disaster management strategy and a five-year programme of action on disaster preparedness and response. Nationally, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had implemented various measures, including rapid response mechanisms, intervention systems and disaster prevention units; a long-term risk reduction policy integrated into development strategies; intergovernmental cooperation with partners to modernize disaster regions; and legal and physical protection for disaster victims. Greater knowledge, technology transfers and financial assistance were required, however, as a lack of resources and capacities had impinged on the Government's ability to implement certain measures and policies.

20. **Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa) said that Samoa's impending graduation from the least-developed-country category was testimony to the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships. True partnerships, which implied shared and joint responsibility, were critical to graduation and also provided the means for sustainable development post-graduation. Consequently, the issue of partnership should be the specific focus of the 2014 Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Conference's success should be measured by the quality and level of commitments made through lasting partnerships. Its outcome document should be brief, simple, focused, forward-looking and implementable and should promote ownership of the process by SIDS and their partners. It should contain achievable solutions through enhanced collaboration and be tailored to key vulnerabilities of SIDS.

21. **Ms. Haynes** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that any further delay in constituting the intergovernmental working group on the establishment of the sustainable development goals risked undermining the promotion of focused and coherent global action for sustainable development. Establishing the institutional framework for sustainable development was also an important step. However, States must avoid duplication and minimize overlapping, as persistent gaps and lack of coordination and coherence had stymied the implementation the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. More effective coordination between normative and operational activities was crucial.

22. The Third International Conference on SIDS and the designation of 2014 as the international year of SIDS should highlight the special needs and priorities of those nations, whose economic growth and development were inextricably linked to their inherent vulnerabilities, particularly rising sea levels. Without appropriate national and international intervention, MDG attainment efforts would be hampered and development gains might be reversed, thereby exacerbating poverty and dislocation. Extreme weather events only made matters worse and put a further strain on already limited resources. Their increasing frequency and intensity underscored the reality of climate change and the importance of meaningful corrective action. To that end, Trinidad and Tobago was implementing transformative measures in its energy sector and various renewable energy initiatives under national climate change and carbon reduction policies. However, such activities were resource- and technology-intensive and required greater support from the international community.

23. **Mr. Momenei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said sustainable development could only be achieved if efforts were based on the full integration of its three dimensions into national, regional and international policymaking. Furthermore, such development depended on effective international cooperation, capacity-building and assistance; thus, technology transfers and the full implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building should be prioritized at the highest political level.

24. Climate change was a serious, universal concern and a threat to natural resources, food security and socioeconomic infrastructure. Dust and sand storms were particularly devastating to his country and the region as a whole and required regional and global cooperation. Technical support and technology transfers, according to national strategies and priorities, would be particularly helpful in combating such storms. However, any post-Kyoto agreement should pay due attention to the issue in order to identify root causes and solutions. Low forest cover was an important contributing factor. To that end, the Islamic Republic of Iran sought to increase national forest cover from 14.3 million hectares to 16 million hectares within 10 years. However, sustainable forest

management required dedicated resources to support implementation and attain related global objectives.

25. **Ms. Metha** (International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)) said that, though it did not satisfy everyone, the Rio+20 outcome document provided a basis for continued action towards sustainable development. For its part, IUCN had discussed practical ways forward in keeping with Rio+20 and approved its programme for 2012-2016. It would be driven by a need for sustainable global production and consumption patterns, more effective and equitable governance of nature's use and enhanced utilization of nature-based solutions. The programme also sought to promote community-based biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and poverty eradication.

26. Progress in implementing the Rio+20 outcomes had been slow to date, as the proposed sustainable development goals and the formation of the open working group had been mired in intergovernmental disagreement. The IUCN hoped that work could start without further delay and provide a framework that was coherent with the MDGs and post-2015 development agenda. Since the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity, progress had been made on halting biodiversity loss, but efforts needed to be scaled up to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which required strong country-level targets and the mainstreaming of biodiversity into national strategies. Biodiversity must be seen as a source of nature-based solutions to broad development challenges. In that regard, the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had adopted a number of important decisions, such as recognizing ecologically and biologically significant marine areas, supporting the accelerated achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and acknowledging the need for far greater resources, including new resources, such as green procurement and tax schemes, and private-sector involvement. However, it was incumbent on States to implement the Rio+20 outcomes and promote greater civil society involvement in post-Rio+20 efforts.

27. **Mr. Bermeo** (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that the Rio+20 Conference had not met everyone's expectations, but its long-term perspective and commitment to collaboration for change was crucial. Change depended on the strong political will of all parties to eschew political expediency and adopt decisions based on the welfare of future generations and the global community as a whole. The green economy, while rich in promise, was not in itself a panacea. With the prevailing development model underperforming, the per capita ecological footprint deteriorating and no country on course to decouple economic activity from environmental degradation, a rethink of economic foundations and growth versus well-being was required.

28. Agreeing the key principles for the sustainable development goals was an important achievement, as such goals provided a countervailing force against short-term political pressures. The goals should build on the MDGs and be integrated into a new global vision of universal sustainability. With climate change reaching the point of no return, ensuring sustainability was a challenge common to all countries and must be dealt with urgently. IPU welcomed General Assembly resolution 66/261, which called for interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and IPU, and it was determined to work with the United Nations system to help channel that contribution at national and global levels, including via the Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. Two overarching issues were likely to arise in that context, namely, governance and development cooperation. If the sustainable development goals were to succeed, then a strong commitment to governance was required as current structures often excluded the people most concerned from discussions and decision-making.

29. Despite earlier recommendations, the Rio+20 outcome document did not provide a clear role for parliaments or parliamentarians. However, IPU hoped that the proposed high-level forum would accommodate their perspective and better integrate economic, social and environmental policies.

30. **Mr. Madiwale** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the recent devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy underscored the need to focus on building resilience to natural disasters as part of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. All indicators currently pointed to an increase in both the incidence and the impact of natural disasters as a result of climate change, environmental degradation, urbanization and the increasing vulnerability of the world's poorest people; the consequences of such calamities constituted a profound threat to prospects for sustainable development.

31. In response, IFRC called for the accelerated implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the financing of commitments made at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, along with the full integration of disaster risk reduction and resilience-building into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

32. Since 1980, disasters in low-income countries had accounted for just 9 per cent of disasters worldwide, yet they had resulted in nearly 50 per cent of all disaster-related fatalities. In addition, low-income countries were disproportionately vulnerable to small and medium-scale disasters, which did not attract the world's attention. Evidence suggested that the cumulative impact of small and medium-scale disasters, which were often seasonal or recurrent, was equal or greater to that caused by large-scale catastrophes, as years of development gains were often swept away overnight.

33. Successive United Nations General Assembly resolutions had recognized the links between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, resilience-building and sustainable development. The outcome document of the Rio +20 Conference went further by explicitly calling for disaster risk reduction and resilience-building to be addressed within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

34. In order to translate those concepts into meaningful outcomes, the amount, flexibility, predictability and duration of funding for disaster risk reduction should be increased, while national and international frameworks should address and be informed by needs at the community level. Currently, disaster risk reduction funding was unacceptably low and did not reflect its importance to sustainable development. IFRC therefore called on donor countries to honour their commitments made in Geneva in 2009 to allocate 1 per cent of official development assistance to disaster risk reduction, up from the current level of 0.07 per cent.

35. The impacts of natural disasters were most often felt at the community level, and investments in resilience-building should consequently be made there by ensuring that local governments and organizations had the resources they needed and were involved in the design and implementation of national and international frameworks for disaster risk reduction. IFRC urged all stakeholders to coordinate disaster risk reduction with sustainable development in the discussions of the post-2015 development agenda, and it urged all Member States to come to an agreement on the constitution of the open working group on sustainable development goals, as further delays would restrict the consultations necessary to reach consensus.

36. **Mr. Khan** (United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)) said that tourism accounted for approximately 45 per cent of services exports by the least developed countries, and was a major economic sector for most small island developing States. As such, climate change posed a demonstrable threat to the economies of some of the world's most vulnerable countries, which themselves contributed to the problem by accounting for some 5 per cent of global CO2 emissions.

37. With tourism-related emissions predicted to increase substantially in the coming years, his organization had accorded a high priority to implementing sustainable tourism worldwide, and had likewise developed a scenario of emissions reductions in the tourism sector based on an investment of 0.2 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP), or $248 billion, between 2011 and 2050 to be spent on mitigation measures.

38. It had likewise been at the forefront of efforts to mitigate and manage the nexus between tourism and biodiversity and was cooperating with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat and other organizations on identifying critical tourism and conservation areas and supporting the integration of biodiversity planning into sustainable tourism development.

39. A number of major agreements, including the Rio+20 outcome document, had reflected a global consensus on the importance of promoting sustainable tourism as a driver of sustained and sustainable development, poverty reduction and job creation. The challenge was now to turn that consensus into policies and actions for tangible results at the national, regional and global levels.

40. His organization had responded to that challenge by providing scaled-up technical assistance and support to Member States, and by working closely with its partners within the United Nations system through the Steering Committee on Tourism and promoting its Global Code of Ethics on Tourism. In addition, the Sustainable Tourism — Eliminating Poverty

programme (ST-EP) was working to enhance energy efficiency in hotel accommodations, while an office dedicated to biodiversity and tourism was implementing projects to demonstrate the positive impact of planning and the use of tourism within the context of biodiversity, climate change and diversification.

41. **Ms. Persic** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the Rio+20 Conference had reaffirmed the principle that universal access to quality education at all levels was essential for achieving sustainable development. In the information-based societies and economies of the contemporary world, access to knowledge and skills was critical, while education for sustainable development was bound to play a vital role in changing production and consumption habits and values, a necessary step towards achieving sustainable development.

42. The natural and social sciences were key drivers on the road to sustainable development, and particular attention should therefore be devoted to enhancing the links between science, policy and society, as well as to capacity-building and support for devising sustainable development policies. Following up on the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, the United Nations Secretary-General had implemented a Scientific Advisory Board for sustainable development under the lead of the Director-General of UNESCO, which would advise executive heads of United Nations entities on ways to strengthen the links between science, policy and society.

43. The crucial role of the oceans, freshwater and biodiversity was another important nexus reaffirmed by the Rio+20 Conference. In that context, the recently launched Oceans Compact would play an important role in implementing commitments concerning oceans, while the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services would contribute greatly to the interface between science and policy. Finally, it had been amply demonstrated that culture and creativity were essential prerequisites for sustainable development and peace, and that cultural heritage and diversity in all of its manifestations promoted social cohesion. Among other things, cultural industries generated jobs and revenues and thereby contributed to inclusive economic growth, as demonstrated by the MDG Fund for Culture and Development and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

44. **Ms. Muedin** (United Nations International Organization for Migration (UNIOM)) said that human mobility within and between countries not only was shaped by a range of diverse economic, social and political interrelations, but also, in turn, exercised a strong influence on them. Migration was therefore an important aspect of the sustainable development equation, and her organization had addressed a number of issues associated with that relationship.

45. In keeping with the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Concrete recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy" (A/66/278), her organization fully endorsed the principle that a healthy environment was essential to livelihoods and food security. The absence of a healthy environment threatened the ability of populations to sustain themselves, while land degradation contributed to hunger and was a significant factor driving migration.

46. The impact of climate change on small island developing countries was of particular concern, not only because of its impact on marine protected areas and the livelihoods associated with them, but also in terms of the very survival of those countries. Her organization believed that the movement of people resulting from climate change should be met with targeted responses, while bearing in mind that some people were too impoverished to move on their own. While local authorities and national Governments were ordinarily best placed to render assistance, in certain circumstances they did not possess the means to do so, in which case the international community should be prepared to provide support.

47. On a related point, disaster risk reduction, including prevention and preparation, played an important role in protecting communities from harm. While many countries had made good progress in enhancing their disaster preparedness, response and early warning mechanisms, a number of gaps remained. Building resilient societies called for a comprehensive approach that factored disaster risk into investment and development decisions; in addition, however, migration, both internal and international, should be taken into account in the risk mitigation and response processes.

48. Rural to urban migration was a key driver of increased urbanization, for instance, and without adequate planning it could increase disaster risks from earthquakes, droughts and floods. For that reason her organization welcomed the attention devoted in the Secretary-General's report to incorporating climate change, environmental degradation, urbanization and population growth into national disaster risk reduction plans. At the same time, mainstreaming migration into such adaptation strategies was critical in order to minimize forced relocations. She therefore urged all Member States to integrate the issue of migration into the discussions of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, in order to achieve a fully inclusive future for all.

Agenda item 17: Information and communications technologies for development (A/67/65-E/2012/48, A/67/65/Corr.1-E/2012/48/Corr.1, A/67/66-E/2012/49, A/67/66/Add.1-E/2012/49/Add.1 and A/67/207)

49. **Mr. Hamdi** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels" (A/67/66-E/2012/49), said that since the second phase of WSIS in 2005 remarkable achievements had been realized in building the information and knowledge society. Information and communications technologies and related services were changing faster than any technology or market in history, and they were exerting a profound influence on a number of public policy domains, including the economy, society, governance, culture, the environment and human rights.

50. Global exports of information and communications technologies now accounted for as much as one fifth of the merchandise traded in developing countries, and there were already nearly 6 billion mobile cellular subscriptions globally. Africa was the fastest-growing mobile market and the biggest after Asia, with the number of subscribers growing at 20 per cent for the past five years. Likewise, the number of Internet users had doubled since 2005, and now totalled 2.3 billion.

51. However, there was justifiable concern that a digital divide was emerging between the developed and developing worlds, as illustrated by the fact that mobile broadband penetration was just 3 per cent in Africa compared to over 90 per cent in the Republic of Korea. Disparities were likewise evident in terms of cost, whereby entry-level broadband connections in most developed countries constituted just 1 per cent of gross national income per capita, but were considerably higher in developing countries. Additional constraints on the development of an information society included a lack of affordable infrastructure such as electricity, human skills and enabling institutional and legal frameworks.

52. Considerable progress had been made in 2011 towards the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS, and United Nations and international agencies were now preparing for the 10-year review of those outcomes in 2014. As stakeholders prepared for the upcoming review, it was necessary to gain a better understanding of the changing nature of the information society and to formulate adaptive policy responses. At the same time, the indicators used to measure progress towards the information society should be further studied, taking into account the rapid changes in information and communications technologies and their use around the world.

53. **Ms. Bilello** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), introducing the Secretary-General's report entitled "Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system" (A/67/207), said that traditional media were increasingly converging with new information and communications technologies, creating a reality rich with possibilities but uneven in its evolution. Both new and old technologies were crucial enablers of change, but a proper understanding of the broader implications of freedom of expression was necessary in order to plan their effective use for the empowerment of poor people to contribute to public agendas.

54. UNESCO had been entrusted with facilitating the free flow of information in order to bridge knowledge differences, foster dialogue and promote the social inclusion of the marginalized and the poor. Along with other United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, it shared the view that communication for development at the United Nations was about strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations system by reinforcing core principles to foster and maintain economic, social and cultural development and peace. From that perspective, it was evident that enabled media environments were needed to underpin

communication for development; such environments could then expedite social participation in the interest of fostering economic and social development, as well as democracy.

55. To that end, it was necessary to promote an environment in which freedom of expression, together with the independence and pluralism of the media, could exist. In the absence of those preconditions, societies could not advance more specific practices, such as health and agricultural communication, to optimal effect. Moreover, it was critical that the news, in particular, reflected the world in a way that went deeper than a male-centric and stereotypical perspective; UNESCO had therefore produced a set of Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media to facilitate standards of equality between women and men working in the media.

56. Media and information literacy equipped citizens with the competence required to assess the relevance and reliability of the information they received, and as such the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers had been well received by numerous stakeholders. Access to new information and communications technologies could be equitable, sustainable and people-centred only if it was accompanied by efficient strategies to address both professional and institutional capacity-building.

57. To that end, a number of inter-agency collaborative efforts had been initiated with the aim of enhancing freedom of expression, including the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS), which had co-developed the WSIS Review Action Plan. Together, such initiatives would move forward the work of building the information society and ensure that access to new information and communications technologies was equitable and inclusive.

58. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the importance of information and communications technologies to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and the promotion of inclusive growth could not be underestimated. However, while there had been significant advances in new technologies, for most of the world's poor the developmental promise of science and technology remained unfulfilled. Creating links between knowledge generation and development was therefore one of the greatest challenges facing the developing countries.

59. The ongoing financial and economic crisis had not only affected the ability of developing countries to mobilize resources for development, but had impacted the pace at which information and communications technologies were being disseminated. WSIS had been held in order to address the challenges posed by the growing digital divide between the developed and developing worlds, and the Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the full and effective implementation of the outcomes of both the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit, including the provision on governance.

60. He further underlined the importance of allowing all Governments to have an equal role and responsibility for international Internet governance and for ensuring the stability, security and continuity of the Internet, in keeping with paragraph 69 of the Tunis Agenda.

61. Finally, he reaffirmed the role of the United Nations General Assembly in the overall review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes, and called for the holding of such a review, in accordance with paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda, in 2015.

62. **Mr. Charles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the Community had long recognized the potential of information and communications technologies to act as catalysts for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals. A number of countries in the region, including his own, had begun to tailor national development strategies to achieve sustainable and inclusive development through a focus on innovation and creativity. The transformative value of information and communications technologies in small, vulnerable economies was beyond dispute, as they acted as key enablers of their development efforts.

63. CARICOM countries were actively involved at the national, subregional and regional levels in initiatives focused on the development of the information and communications sector through the implementation of WSIS outcomes. They had embarked on the development of a Regional Digital Development Strategy, were participating in the e-Latin America and Caribbean Initiative, and were part of the Commonwealth Connects Programme

seeking to harness the potential of new technologies to support sustainable development objectives. The region had likewise been involved in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU)/European Commission (EC) joint project entitled "Enhancing competitiveness in the Caribbean through the harmonization of information and communications policies, legislation and regulatory procedures".

64. Although a great deal of progress had been achieved, a number of challenges continued to hamper regional efforts to implement the outcomes of WSIS, including insufficient resources, fragmentation and lack of coordination. CARICOM therefore called on the international community to enhance its support for the development of the information and communications sector through strengthened partnerships, increased technology transfers and capacity-building tailored to meet the particular needs of small societies.

65. In addition, as the Internet was now widely recognized as a foundational element in the development of an information society, the issue of Internet governance and its economic, social and cultural implications had become extremely relevant. In that context, CARICOM believed that Internet governance should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, and should involve the full participation of developing countries.

66. Finally, the WSIS review should receive a high level of political commitment from all Governments, given the far-reaching implications of its outcomes for the future of cooperation on information and communications technologies for development.

67. **Ms. Ibrahim** (Brunei Darussalam), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that given the importance of information and communications technologies for sustainable and inclusive development, there was growing concern with regard to the emerging digital divide between the developed and developing worlds. In addition, the continuing uncertainty of the global economic and financial situation had discouraged potential investors from making much-needed investments in the information and communications industries of developing countries. It was therefore crucial that Member States, as well as the private sector, should work together to increase the integrity and reliability of telecommunications networks and to improve the security and resilience of the information and communications technology infrastructure.

68. More than 10 years had passed since ASEAN began cooperating in the information and communications technology sector, and significant results had been achieved. Technological advances had been incorporated in a wide variety of sectors, including health, education, commerce and governance, and more than 78 per cent of the citizens of ASEAN now depended on information and communications technologies. More than 11.7 million people were employed in the sector, contributing more than $32 billion to the economy annually. In addition, at least five ASEAN countries had achieved 100 per cent mobile penetration.

69. Furthermore, ASEAN had begun analysing strategies to stimulate broadband adoption, with the eventual goal of creating an environment conducive to e-business, e-commerce, venture capital and talent promotion. It was also looking into strengthening cooperation in telecommunications regulations in order to facilitate the development of the telecommunications industry and to further promote collaboration in regulatory practices, policy strategies and coordination of standards.

70. Through such initiatives, ASEAN hoped to establish information and communications technologies as an engine of growth for its member States, and to develop the region as a telecommunications and information hub. Because the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies played a vital role in promoting and expanding the information and communications sector, ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment and support for the work of the Second Committee in coming up with an effective and sustainable response to the challenges and opportunities of the coming information society.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.